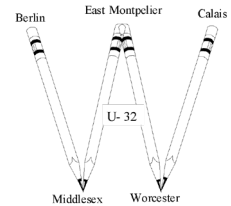


Washington Central Unified Union School District

WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.

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WCUUSD Finance Committee Meeting 9.16.24 5:00-6:00 PM In Person/Virtual U-32 930 Gallison Hill Rd Montpelier, VT

Present: Superintendent Dellinger-Pate, Ursula Stanley, Kealy Sloan, Chris McVeigh, Michael Sherwin, Ellen Knoedler, Julia Hewitt, Allen Gilbert, Elizabeth Brown, David Delcore, Lila Richardson, Robert M, Vanessa Weinstein, Caitlin Howansky, Jeanie Phillips, Susanne Gann, Daniel Keeney, Zach Sullivan, Alicia Lyford, Patrick Whelley, Addie Wheeler, Jarrod Weiss

1. Call to Order: Ursula Stanley called the meeting to order at 5:05. She noted that Flor Diaz Smith is absent tonight and sends her best, and will be at the WCUUSD Board meeting later this week.

2. Discussion/Action

2.1. Data/Information: Steven Dellinger-Pate and Susanne Gann shared first draft of baseline budget including reconfiguration, moving 6th grade to U-32. He stated that there has not been any conversation with personnel about possible RIF: reduction in force. The presentations tonight reflect staffing patterns broadly but do not refer to people/ positions. After the presentation, the committee discussed: To consider: in anticipation of this being shared at Wednesday's board meeting:

- What are some of your observations about this data?
- How does this affect our work?
- What else?

Chris M: would like to see a four elementary school configuration and see what that budget looks like as well. In addition, can you identify how we are saving? Where are the savings coming from in these drafts? (Steven Dellinger-Pate: much of that is personnel savings;

others are building upkeep.) (Susanne Gann: capital budget, building operations, but mostly personnel.) Chris M: does that impact programming? (Steven Dellinger-Pate: not that we can tell right now, but the leadership team will review this.) Daniel Keeney: looking at the baseline budget, what are the drivers for the increase - what are the hierarchy of cost increase drivers? (Susanne Gann: salary adjustments as per contracts; health insurance - this estimate reflects 15% increase as an estimate; also inflation rate) (Steven Dellinger-Pate: grant funded positions that were moved into the operating budget) Chris M: what is our debt service number and how many buildings are we holding debt for? (Susanne Gann: approximately \$976K - currently Doty, Calais, and U-32 do not hold debt; the other schools do). Chris M: When we took on the grant-funded positions, was there any consideration that we would not be moving them into the general fund? (Susanne Gann believes that there was a hope that these positions would be moved into the general fund.) Chris M: Did we have very direct conversations about this scenario, if the grant funding expired; the general fund would absorb them? (Susanne Gann: we have not had these draft discussions with the leadership: this draft reflects positions that are currently in place.) Chris M: the five-year plan that we are looking at does not include Calais and Doty in the future. (Susanne Gann: the current capital budget does not include any projects for them after 2026). Ursula: can we include the threshold penalty for the Wednesday presentation? Some questions about enrollment that is represented - does this include 6th grade at U-32? Clarify for Wednesday. **Observations:** Dan K: The pie chart that breaks down spending is helpful; the comparison of the two, is not as much. Would be interested to see how things such as increase in health care affects the overall increase. Susanne Gann - that is included in the budget summary. Dan K would like to understand more about a smaller share of our budget coming from the Ed fund; also interested in the uses of the Ed fund (breakdown of ways Ed fund is used aside from contributing to our budget.) Kealy S: Why is the budget per pupil so different between schools now? Steven Dellinger-Pate - the biggest difference is probably related to student needs depending on the school.) Chris M: When, e.g., a small school cuts back, is this made at the local level, or is this a larger leadership decision? Steven Dellinger-Pate: we do that work as a team. Chris M: Is the bonding for each school, that debt, incorporated into the budget for the school building? Susanne Gann - it is at the district level and then reallocated to each school based on student enrollment. Alicia Lyford: the baseline budget is representing the same personnel/ programming but a decrease in enrollment; keep this in mind. Ursula S: is per pupil actual students or is it weighted? Steven Dellinger-Pate - is actual per pupil. Will represent that in the presentation. Alicia L: it might be helpful to have information about Pre-K, as the numbers presented do not reflect Pre-K. Susanne Gann asked for clarification around the request from Chris to present a four-school configuration model. The committee will address this at the end of the meeting. Susanne Gann indicated that this could not be ready for the Wednesday board meeting. The committee considered the criteria table. Daniel K: understanding the basis for the criteria that is used would be clarifying for the next iteration/ presentation. Chris M spoke about the criteria of "financial sustainability." What is the baseline for making this value judgment? In addition, for how long, regarding sustainability? Would be helpful to have the "how" and the "why" answered. Kealy S: when looking at baseline vs configuration, are there any differences that we expect to go away after one year? Alternatively, increase after one year? Is this a one-time savings or is this a longer-term savings? Chris M: having a projection into the future will be helpful.

Some conversation followed around Act 46. Ursula stated that we do not know what the budgets for schools would have been, had we not consolidated through Act 46. Chris M: we need to have this discussion in the context of our community and the issues/ concerns that they raise. They are the ones who are voting. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate: we will continue to tweak this information/ presentation so that you have as much as possible to make these decisions. Daniel K is interested in considering the cost of having longer working days for our school buildings - e.g. 7:30 - 5:30 p.m. Ursula S asked the will of the committee regarding the request from Chris M to show a four elementary school model. Chris M stated that, since we are hearing this from our communities, it would be useful to come back with that information. Ursula S asked committee members to consider the criteria table and think about whether we want to ask our administration to come back with a four-school model. Kealy would be interested in seeing what a four-school model looks like. She agrees with Chris that this might be what we are faced with so we need to consider this. Dan K: when editing this matrix, we should consider the four-school model. He agrees that a red line through the cost savings on the matrix is not helpful - would be helpful to understand more of the dynamics and more information. Understand that the focus on editing this matrix should be squarely on the four elementary school models, and we need to be clear about why we are landing in this place. Patrick W agrees that this is a likely scenario and it will be useful information to have so that we can make a more informed decision. Zach S: regarding the criteria matrix, especially related to three schools versus four schools, consider fiscally responsible versus cost savings? Consider educational opportunities. Ursula: has concerns about our administration expending the energy to produce a model that will not meet our criteria, and therefore that we would not have put forward as a board. She feels that it makes more sense to respond to the community's vote, as needed/ if needed. Patrick W: Cannot make that judgment without seeing data. Alicia L: it will take a good chunk of time to look at this with the board on Wednesday. Would it be safer to look at the blue boxes on the criteria table? Ursula: It might be helpful as a full board to take a closer look at the criteria table. Steven Dellinger-Pate: The board will also have the opportunity this Wednesday to give feedback on the budget draft as presented. The board's parameters/ feedback around the budget will very much frame configuration models that are brought for consideration. There is no way to bring the four-school model to the board by Wednesday. Chris: Since Doty and Calais are roughly the same as far as number of students, can we go with the assumption that the savings would be half? However, it looks like per pupil cost is different between the schools. Rough numbers would help inform the conversation on Wednesday. Ursula: what do we want to bring to the board from tonight's meeting?

- Revised data/ tables as discussed
- Chris M: Can we get some solid data regarding what programs will be sustained in a three or 4-school model? This is still unclear. How to explain the cost differential when comparing.
- Can administration include this in their presentation?

1. [Previous Presentation - 9/4/24](#)
2. [Previous Presentation - 8/21/24](#)
3. [Previous presentation - 8/19/24](#)

4. Resources

1. [FAQ](#)
2. [Class Size](#)
3. [School Size](#)
4. Education Quality Standards (EQS) - [Current, Updated](#) (to take effect July 1, 2025)
5. [Revised Criteria](#) 8.21.24

5. **Future Agenda Items**

6. **Public Comment:** Lila Richardson: In response to the combined Rumney and Doty school, the information that was shared provides no new information. We do not have any further information about Pre-K; this is important to inform going forward. The information provided so far has been incomplete for reasons that are not understood. She will follow up with a memo to the board. Caitlin Howansky: Doty has shown itself to be the most financially effective; and carries no debt load. It feels like other schools need our student dollars to make their debt loads feasible. She also noticed that we are no longer breaking up student enrollment by schools/ towns. This would be important information to share. Proactive versus reactive multi-grade classrooms: Parents do not feel that our combined grades are reactive; they feel that they planned proactively, and have been very positive experiences. Allen Gilbert explained why someone looking at the charts is going to have a different view of what is happening: It looks like Worcester and Calais are the relatively low-cost schools. Ought you to be at least sending some kids from East Montpelier and Rumney to Worcester and Calais? Those schools are the lowest cost (per pupil). Why would you close the low-cost schools? It is bald that the low-cost schools are the ones being knocked off, and does not understand why. Kealy Sloan: This is true for Doty (lowest cost per pupil) but not for Calais based on the data provided (pg. 22) Daniel Keeney would like to explain explicitly what we think the factors are that are contributing to baseline budget differentials. Susanne Gann: Student needs drive a lot of it. Daniel Keeney stated to include what was included in the budget expenditure, per pupil, by building. Some discussion about WCUUSD expenses that are assessed to schools.

7. **Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Grace, Committee Recording Secretary